Maharashtra since inception of the programme has been provided Rs. 739.092 crore as CLA upto January, 2005 for 23 major/medium on-going irrigation projects for their early completion. This also includes Rs. 9.585 crore released as grant during the year 2004-2005. There is no other programme for providing Special Loan Assistance to State of Maharashtra for completion of on-going irrigation projects.

Contaminated ground water

†148. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a survey conducted by the Central Ground Water Board reveals that about 23 crore people of the country are compelled to utilize contaminated ground water;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have formulated any scheme to rid people of this contaminated water; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) No such survey has been conducted by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB). However, studies conducted by CGWB have indicated sporadic instances of Fluoride and Arsenic contamination due to geogenic sources.

(c) and (d) Water being a State subject, it is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments to formulate schemes to provide people with contamination free water. However, the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) has provided technical guidance to the States and has organized a number of mass awareness programmes to educate the people for the purpose. The CGWB also monitors ground water quality periodically to map the changes in it and apprises the State Governments of the same for taking necessary remedial measures. It has also drilled exploratory wells tapping contamination free aquifer zones and has handed over these wells to the State Governments for utilisation.

The Department of Drinking Water Supply, under the Ministry of Rural

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Development, is rendering financial and technical assistance to the States for tackling water quality problems in rural areas on 75:25 funding pattern between Central Government and State Government. With effect from 01.04.1998, powers have been delegated to the State Governments for sanctioning and implementing projects for tackling quality problem. 15% of financial assistance to State Governments under the Centrally Sponsored Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) have been earmarked for tackling quality problem.

Restructuring of RRBS

149. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been considering certain measures for restructuring Regional Rural Banks, which play a key role in providing rural credit;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is proposed to extensively amend the Regional Rural Banks Act to evolve a hybrid model combing several options; and

(d) if so, by when it is likely to be done?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S. S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) Several suggestions for restructuring of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) have been considered like de-linking of RRBs from Sponsor Banks, amalgamation of RRBs at regional or State level, merger with Sponsor Banks, making RRBs subsidiaries of the Sponsor Banks, their consolidation into a National Rural Bank etc. In the meantime, Government has decided that each sponsor Bank will be held squarely accountable for the performance of RRBs under its control. RRBs that adopt a new governance standard and that abide by the prudential regulations will qualify for receiving funds from the Government for restructuring. Further as a step towards the consolidation of RRBs, the Government has initiated the process of amalgamation of contiguous RRBs sponsored by the same Bank within a State in consultation with the respective State Government and NABARD.

(c) No such propposal is under consideration, at present.

(d) Does not arise.